NYM CRINKLE'S LETTER

The Divine Patti and Her Latest Work in New York.

HER FAREWELLS AND FLOWERS.

She Ignores the Author and Protrudes Herself; but She Sings "Home, Sweet Home" and We Are All Happy—Crane's New Play.

[Special Correspondence.]

NEW YORK, April 13.—Adelina Patti has sung her farewell song in opera at the Metropolitan. It is not at all likely that she will ever cross the Atlantic again professionally, and we have been saying good-by both to the world's favorite vocalist and to a style of lyric entertainment in which the personality and talent of the singer were everything and the composer and his work nothing.

Patti is the last of the great prima donnas who dared to obtrude her personal claims at all times. She did it more defiantly than any of her predecessors, and more acceptably than any of her contemporaries.

She had become a world's wonder and the consciousness that the public went to see and hear her and not to see or hear the work to which she was critically related made her imperious, independent and defiant.

I never heard so perfect a vocalist. I never saw so careless an impersonator. She seemed to have given all her life and faculties to the preservation of her voice and appearance. She never grew careless in her singing. But she outgrew all desire to be the person represented. Time never succeeded in betraying the worn timber of her upper notes. She had acquired the art of concealment and lost the art of portrayal. There was not a feminine grace or pretty girlish device of manner that was not worn as cogently at fifty as at fifteen, and she has been content to remain to the last the regnant Patti, while all the characters of the old Italian opera that she impersonated have passed into oblivion.

I saw her at the finish of the season in Donizetti's "Lucia," once a favorite opera no less on account of its delicious melodies and its magnificent sextet than on account of its simple, intelligible and touching love story. I never anywhere saw a performance in which the composer and his work were so inimitably shoved into the background by the personality of a singer. She treated the story with a delicious contempt, and it was accepted only as an excuse for Mme. Patti to come on at intervals and sing for the audience at the footlights and coquette with them in her own unapproachable style.

The integrity and illusion of the opera were broken into by a regulation way of skipping down at the proper times to do her arias and then skipping off. The rest of the company trying to fill in the interregnums as best they might.

The audience treated the affair as a reception of Patti's. It used every plaudditory device known to an audience to keep her at the footlights, where it could carry on the flirtation regardless of the story or the ensemble. It asked her to sing "Home, Sweet Home" while Edgardo was waiting to break his heart, and she sang it, although it has no more place in the opera than "The Star Spangled Banner."

It passed flowers up to her continually, intoxicated with delight at her girlish astonishment and spontaneous joy at receiving them. Patti must have accepted flowers enough in her lifetime to make an ordinary career one perpetual decoration day. It is a striking evidence of her unimpaired faculties that she still claps her hands and sheds tears and has a heavenly little thrill at the sight of a bunch of roses, and although her room at the hotel may be stored to the ceiling with bouquets, she goes through the same gamut of spontaneity at every additional bud.

Some variation was made on this occasion, however, for a live puppy was handed over the footlights with other things. This episode was of more interest than anything in the opera, and it furnished a little comedy scene of more spontaneity and kisses.

Viewed from any composer's standpoint Patti is a divine impertinence, and none of them, with the single exception of Rossini, lies quiet in his grave when she is singing his opera. Rossini alone is content, for the Rosina of his "Barber" is so conceived that she appears to be only gathering bouquets.

A very significant incident occurred here last week. Comic opera managers are now put to their wit's end to devise new and startling costumes for the chorus, which is always the important thing in comic opera. No one any longer goes to hear music in this form of entertainment. He goes to see what the manager will do with the girls.

Somebody struck a new idea in the "Child of Fortune," and it was to dress the girls as Scotch laddies, a proceeding which implied in its correctness some small portion of an absolutely bare leg.

The opera is to be produced at the Casino, and it evidently occurred to the management to make the most of the Scotch costume feature, so to begin with the papers broke out the other day with the announcement that the girls at the Casino were in a state of revolt at the proposition to exhibit two inches of bare leg, but that, so far as could be learned from the management, they would have to succumb to the Scotch regulations.

This was ingenious. It excited public attention, aroused curiosity and awakened interest. But the fact is the girls had no more idea of rebelling than they had of expiring. I was talking with one of them shortly after, and she hadn't heard anybody object. She didn't clearly know what a Scotch laddie's costume was, but whatever it was she guessed the girls could stand it if the manager could.

Mr. William H. Crane has produced another play at the Star theater. It is called "The American Minister," and is laid in Italy. It is an attempt, and not altogether an unsuccessful one, to place an eccentric American in foreign surroundings, with the one idea of making the contrast in character and environment humorous. The play is farcical, and Mr. Crane is a farce actor. He has not got a serious turn in him. He handles the somewhat trivial incidents of this comedy with his usual sprightliness and manages to make people laugh, but the work itself is defective in its bathos; it makes important things trivial, degrades responsible personages to ridiculous conditions, and generally views diplomacy and United States officials as idiocy and end men.

The piece can never take rank among worthy dramas, for its theme or its literature. It can only prove successful as a new medium for Mr. Crane's personality and humor.

At the Park theater we had at the same time the white cruisers utilized at last in melodrama. A tumultuous affair called "The Golden Ladder" was produced by Mr. Edwin F. Thorne. This time the scene is laid in Chili, during the recent unpleasantness, and the hero, pursued by Chilian villains, takes refuge on a United States cruiser, and in reply to the demand of the Chilian authorities the commanding officer "beats to quarters," surrounds the scene with blue jackets and invites the authorities to "come and take the man."

A worse play was probably never seen anywhere, but this claptrap episode saved it.

Apropos of the recent moral spasm brought on by Dr. Parkhurst's attack upon the vice of New York, and coincident with the public interest in the discussion of official corruption, Mr. Richard Mansfield revived his "Nero" at the Garden theater. The presentation of this historic monster in all his lust and cowardice might have had one good lesson for New York if New York were in the habit of accepting lessons from the stage.

Mr. Mansfield, with a good deal of Dr. Parkhurst's courage, set Nero forth without any extenuation. You know how terrible this actor can be in depicting the horrible—well he might have ransacked all history in vain for more loathsome material.

I wonder if it occurred to any one who sat blanched under the mimic spectacle that Nero was the outcome of conditions that are socially present if not politically operative in New York today. Canon Farrar, who has just published a remarkable book on Nero, makes him the putrid flower of a morbid æstheticism. When vice failed to thrill the tyrant's jaded pulses he resorted to cruelty. Mr. Mansfield had curiously brought out this fact in his play. His monster is an æsthete. He inflicts pain because it is a luxury to him.

Canon Farrar's book is called "Darkness and Dawn." If I did not know that Mr. Mansfield's play was written before the publication of this book I should say he had taken his inspiration from it.

NYM CRINKLE.

LITERARY FAME DECLINED.

Some Interesting Anecdotes of Depew, Evarts and Conkling.

[Special Correspondence.]

NEW YORK, April 12.—Some of the most eagerly sought men by publishers of magazines and of books for literary work are those who decline for any consideration whatever to write for publication. Probably larger sums have been offered for literary work to men who have declined such offer than with a few exceptions have been paid for literature even to the most conspicuous writers.

Chauncey M. Depew is an example or type of this class of men. Not a week passes that Mr. Depew does not receive one or more propositions from publishers for articles upon all sorts of subjects, and frequently the choice of subject is left to him. He invariably declines, although if he would consent now and then, he could add what to a man of limited income would seem a very considerable amount to his yearly receipts. Depew does not decline, however, because he has an aversion to writing. On the contrary, he likes it, and he often tells his friends that the ideal occupation for a man of refinement, who has a sufficient income to be independent of his pen, is literary work, and he says Blaine was more to be envied when he spent the two or three years in quiet in which he was writing his "Twenty Years in Congress" than for any other period in his active political career.

Mr. Depew refuses to write simply because he has found it necessary to make an inflexible rule. If he does not break it for one, nobody will feel offended if he also declines other propositions. Upon a recent occasion he did make an exception, but the circumstances were peculiar. A young man, in whom he was greatly interested, and who was just beginning what promised to be a brilliant journalistic career, went to Mr. Depew and asked him if he would write an article upon a certain subject, and said that if he would do it and would sign it it would be of the very greatest value to this young man in enabling him to make substantial journalistic connections. Depew could not resist that appeal, and within half an hour had dictated the article, signed it, and it was published in one of the magazines to the very great surprise of other publishers.

Roscoe Conkling once did a thing somewhat similar. Conkling could have commanded his own terms for a series of magazine articles reminiscent and also embodying his views of political life, as he had gathered them in an experience of nearly a quarter of a century. He could not be prevailed upon, however, to undertake the task, although the idea appealed to him somewhat, for Conkling was very fond of writing. He did not think, however, that he could spare the time, for he was just then beginning to build up a law practice in New York city. Anything that Conkling said about public affairs or public men had the highest market value in newspaper offices. An interview with him once published in one of the New York papers was esteemed so valuable that the editor cheerfully paid $500 for it.

One day a young man, something of an invalid, who had been doing some newspaper work, called upon Mr. Conkling and asked him for an interview, or rather asked him to write something and sign his name to it. Conkling declined, and noticing the look of sadness which came to the young man's face he asked him if the declination had really caused him disappointment, and was told it had because the young writer was counting upon an interview to raise money enough to meet some pressing obligation. He had often written pleasantly of Conkling and had done him some trivial services, and the great senator was the last man to forget a courtesy, no matter how slight. He said to the reporter: "My dear boy, you shall have the interview. I will talk to you; now, what shall I talk about? The only thing I ask is that you take my words down as I utter them and exact a promise that what I say shall not be mutilated when it appears in print."

Then he began, and for half an hour talked with all his charm, composing his sentences with as much care as if he were preparing a speech for the senate. At last he said: "There, perhaps that will be enough, and I hope it will serve you. If not, come and let me know." It did, for within six hours the young man had received a check for $300.

William M. Evarts is another of the men who have been almost literally besieged for literary contributions and who always declines. He could have received as large prices as are paid Gladstone for his work, but he only smiles and usually replies with some witty allusion to the fact, as he puts it, that he is a lawyer, a pleader in in the courts, and not a writer.

A recent story has been told of Evarts' wit in replying to such appeals. He had a party to dinner and one of the dishes was a baked ham. The pig had been reared on Mr. Evarts' stock farm, and the ham cured there after a method which his manager claims to have discovered and which makes the ham, in his opinion and that of Mr. Evarts, most toothsome. It is pretty expensive ham by the time it reaches Mr. Evarts' table, although he does not mind the expense. His guest upon the occasion referred to had been served with it, and Mr. Evarts, taking a piece upon his fork, looked at it quizzically and humorously for a few moments and then said, "I received the other day a letter from the publisher of a magazine asking me for a contribution from my pen. I don't know but I had better send him a piece of this ham." The guests were convulsed with laughter, as is usually the case at a dinner table where Mr. Evarts sits.

Mr. Evarts' partner, Joseph H. Choate, Mr. J. Pierpont Morgan, the banker, and Mr. Frederick Olcott, who has gained fame as a railroad reorganizer, are among those who have been often asked to contribute and who make it a rule to decline such propositions.

E. J. EDWARDS.

A Chance for the Girls.

SEATTLE, Wash., April 16.—When Horace Greeley told the young men to "go west" he should have told the young women to do likewise, for women, and especially young women, are at a premium here. Managing mammas with broods of grown-up daughters should profit by this information.

A trip across the continent to the great northwest would be beneficial in many ways, even if desirable husbands were not found. There is no educator like travel; it broadens one's ideas, opens up new channels of thought and stores up a world of memories that are sources of pleasure while life lasts. Visiting summer resorts year after year is of little benefit; the same set of people are met, the same round of gayeties are pursued with a zest worthy of a better cause; young men are at a premium, and young women disconsolate because of the scarcity of the masculine element. Take my advice, young woman, come west.

LAURA B. STARR.

Of Interest to Cremationists.

The Japanese some time ago adopted burial of the dead, in imitation of European nations. It will be interesting to cremationists to learn that, according to The Indian Medical Gazette, they have reverted to their own custom of burning the dead on account of its sanitary recommendations.

There died in Bybrook, Jamaica, in 1838, a woman named Letitia Cox, who is believed to have attained a greater age than any one in modern times. She had documents to prove that she was 160 years old.

HER DREAM REALIZED TO-DAY.

THE RUSSIAN JEWS.

WHAT IS BEING DONE FOR RECENT IMMIGRANTS.

Training Schools in New York and Chicago—Agricultural Colonies in New Jersey and Connecticut—How the Refugees Benefit by the Hirsch Fund.

[Special Correspondence.]

NEW YORK, April 12.—No larger social problem has been presented to the American people for solution than that made by the coming to the United States of vast hordes of Russian Hebrews during the past few years. This immigration is of a different character than that which, to any extent, has previously come to the United States. It is twofold in character and both are usually thought to be pernicious in their tendency. These people have either been forced by the cruel oppression of the Russian government to flee from their old homes and come hither, or by the assistance of the Baron Hirsch fund they have been brought across the sea. It is not my purpose to discuss either of these two general questions, but rather to tell briefly what is being done by those in charge of the Baron Hirsch fund in America to fit these people for life amid the new and strange surroundings of the western world. Those men who undertook to act as trustees for the Hirsch fund very early saw that unless very vigorous measures should be taken to restrict the number coming and to supply these people with homes and work as soon as they arrived, that the whole movement would be a disastrous failure before it had fairly got started.

Among those persons who objected to this method of bringing these Russian Hebrews to the United States there were a great many very influential Jews. They saw the difficulties in the way of making the movement successful, and they protested against it to such an extent that some of them were called inhospitable, selfish and un-American. They rejoined that they were only a little more farsighted than some others. When the movement had begun and when in a little while there were thousands of these people near New York, homeless and destitute, these very American Jews who had protested against the idea as false in principle were the most active in rescuing their Russian brethren from the miserable wretchedness of their plight. This showed that they were unselfish in the first instance and that their charity was not hindered because their advice had been disregarded.

And from that time till now the American Jews have not relaxed their efforts to improve the condition of these Russian immigrants. In New York and Chicago schools have been started. Both old and young are taught English, and there are technical schools in which young men and women can be taught useful occupations. In New York the molding process has been attempted in various ways. The work has been more complicated than elsewhere because New York contains so many more immigrants than any other city. Even the large number in Chicago is small in proportion to the number of those in New York.

The most important work, probably, is carried on in the new Hebrew institute, at Jefferson street and East Broadway. A large number of the immigrants receive instruction there. The building, which is of recent construction, has a height of five stories and covers a ground area of 87 by 92 feet. The walls are of yellow pressed brick trimmed with stone, and the interior is as nearly fireproof as possible, the staircases being of iron and slate. It has electric lights and steam heat, and pure air is introduced by a powerful blower with ventilating flues. On the first floor, which is raised above the street, there are rooms for the directors, a room for the industrial school and the kindergarten.

In the story below, which is partly beneath the street, is the audience hall, with seats for 710 persons and a stage on which there is a piano and room for twenty persons. This hall is used for meetings, and every Saturday evening a free concert is given. In the second story are eight classrooms, and on the third floor are the rooms of the Aquilar free library and the Young Men's Hebrew association. The fifth story is given up to a gymnasium, a room for a cooking school and the workshop for the manual training school. The gymnasium has all modern improvements, with baths and lockers. Great importance is given to physical culture, for these immigrants are sadly deficient in bodily strength, and for that reason are indisposed to adopt trades to follow which requires standing long at a time on the feet. The roof of the house is paved over and is used as a summer garden.

This institution has been in operation twenty months, and during that time some 2,500 children have been graduated into the public schools. The instruction necessary before these newly landed children can go to the ordinary public schools is mainly in English, and I am told that the youngsters pick up enough of the new tongue in a very little while. Another most necessary lesson to be learned is that of personal cleanliness. The Russian peasantry are the most uncleanly people probably to be found in the world. These Russian Hebrews are probably neither better nor worse in this regard than the others of the czar's subjects of a similar class.

This is a lesson very difficult to teach, for it is hard for the pupils to comprehend the necessity for it. The only way that it is effectually accomplished is by excluding such as are not neat and cleanly from the other advantages of the institute. Great care has to be exercised also in keeping children and others away from the institute while they are afflicted with infectious diseases or while such prevail in the tenement houses in which these people are lodged. Probably the great majority of these immigrants, until they reached America, never had any except the crudest possible notions as to the value of good hygienic surroundings.

These schools are open during the day for children and in the evening for grown persons who work during the day. In these evening classes there are many gray beards. The old people, however, do not learn nearly so rapidly as the children, either in the mental or manual classes. The effort so far as they are concerned is generally exhausted after teaching them enough English to enable them to understand and be understood. Then there is an effort made to secure for these employments similar to those they had in Russia. While a great deal has been done by the institute in the directions indicated, the whole result is very small in comparison with what it would be desirable to do. The accommodations have already become too small and new buildings will soon be erected. The cost of the instruction of these classes is paid for from the Hirsch fund.

The efforts of the Hebrews in Chicago toward uplifting the Russian refugees who have settled there have been concentrated in the Jewish Training school. The adult immigrants are not influenced directly, but the instructors aim to reach them through their children. All the Hebrews of Chicago stand behind this school. The building is in Judd street. It is four stories high and covers an area of 60 by 110 feet. It has eighteen classrooms and workshops, besides offices, teachers' rooms and a conference hall for teachers. It contains excellent appointments for both pupils and teachers and is kept scrupulously neat. In the ground story are the carpentry, modeling and machinery departments, which constitute the manual training section. On this floor also are bathrooms and lavatories.

In the second story are a large hall and two adjoining rooms for the kindergarten department, three rooms for the primary classes and the superintendent's room. In the story above are two classrooms and a large hall which can be divided into two rooms. When so divided one-half is used as a classroom and the other as a gymnasium and music room. In the top story, in addition to two large classrooms, are a room for dressmaking, a room for the ungraded classes, the physical and chemical laboratories and a conference hall. This school was opened in October, 1890, and since then it has had all the pupils it could accommodate—1,000 at a time.

With such instruction as is afforded at the two schools mentioned, many children can be quickly fitted to enter the regular public schools, where there are accommodations for pretty nearly all of them. Many of the refugees who have come to America were farmers in Russia, and these would not be self supporting in the cities. Several agricultural colonies have been made for these. The most notable of such are located in southeastern New Jersey and in Connecticut. The reports from these colonies indicate that these people have developed no small degree of skill as husbandmen. The Hirsch fund provides each family with twenty acres, a house, a barn, a cow, a few chickens, the necessary tools and seed for the first planting. This is at an expense of $1,200. When this is returned a deed will be given to the occupant. The section in which these colonies are well adapted for truck farming, and the trustees of the Hirsch fund look very hopefully to this experiment.

BASEBALL SMALL TALK.

Ren Mulford's Gossipy Letter of the National Game.

SOME FAMOUS OLD HAS BEENS.

Some Who Have Dropped Off the Diamond—High Salaries and Good Work Don't Always Go Together—Bradley's Expansive Smirk and Radbourne's Scowl.

There are a good many famous old has beens among those on the retired list this season. Dickey Johnston, Mike Slattery, Charley Radbourne, Bob Clark, Louis Rogers Browning and Long John Reilly are a few of the ball playing corps who are not on the pay rolls of the major league, and a majority of them have failed to affiliate with the powers that control the destinies of the little fellows in the game. As the campaign wears on this list will be increased rather than decreased. Washington has given one veteran of the old line a passport into the ranks of the talent at liberty—George Wood. In this array are men who have marched to pennant music in more than one championship race. Father Time has chalked the hats of some of them, and they have bowed to the inevitable and given way to more active players. If the opening games of the clubs in the Western league can be taken as any criterion, the cities in that circuit are bound to see some very eyeable ball ere the leaves begin to turn. When the Western adopted the deadline in the game and established a salary limit, there were doubting Thomases who predicted that there would not be enough players in the business to fill the quota of ninety-six at the shrunken figures—compared of course to those that obtained when good business sense was a small ingredient in the make-up of a minor magnate. The false prophets have gone out of the profession.

Bob Clark, who helped win a flag for Atlanta in the Southern league and later on aided Brooklyn in its bunting winnings in 1889 and 1890, dropped into the press quarters at Cincinnati during the recent series with the westerners from the Buckeye State capital. He could have found a refuge in that class had he been on the lookout for a berth.

"I was fooled," said he, "for I didn't think the clubs would all fill with the cut rate in salaries. When you come to think about it Columbus cannot afford to pay any more than that team costs." Columbus with its $1,200 team under Captain Campau made Captain Comiskey's $6,000 beauties stir their stumps to beat them in both contests that took place in Porkopolis. It would be absurd to claim that Cincinnati played five times better ball than their opponents. If the article of ball could be measured by the size of the roll disbursed at the captain's office on the 1st and 15th of each month such a difference might confidently be expected. Salaries, however, cut no figure in the case. The cheapest salaried team Cincinnati ever had won the only championship bunting that ever floated in the Mill Creek valley breezes and split even with Chicago in a series before the birth of the world's championship idea.

Last year the highest salaried group of players who had worn the red managed to boost poor old Pittsburg into last place, after they had occupied it all season. There will have to be some very clever ball playing done to keep Columbus from a successful flirtation with Miss Victory when the time comes for her to smile upon the favored one in the west. In Clausen and Stevens the Buckeyes have a pair of pitchers it will do to watch. There are some who sincerely mourn over one phase of the recent lottery, and in the little coterie of the sorrowful is Charles H. Cushman, the chief of the Brewers. He had his managerial hooks well fastened upon both Clausen and Hughey, and neither of them was in his net after he had pulled it out of the Chicago fish pond.

"It was tough luck to lose both of them," said he to me. "Columbus got Clausen and Kansas City has Hughey. They will both make their mark in the Western."

Gossiping about the situation in that circuit he said: "I think Milwaukee has got the baldest man in the business. The first time I met the boys I saw one in the group with a conk that would have worried a nearsighted billiardist. Come to find out he was one of my young blood pitchers, Henry Jones. Pop Corkhill and little Jack Munyan could act as understudies for Paderewski compared to my find!"

Another one of the "outs" this year is Ferd Schmitt, the pitcher with a Fatherland accent. Schmitt was as queer a genius as ever twirled a ball. He used to "keep books" between innings. While his team was at bat he spent his time entering the weaknesses of the opposing batsmen on a little memorandum slip. Schmitt is in Pittsburg doing some long distance knocking at the doors of minor clubs.

"I got 'the bookkeeper' a berth once," declared Manager Cushman. "He wrote to me for a place with the Milwaukees, but I had no room. I turned his letter over to Manager Watkins, however, with the recommendation, 'Watty, here is a man who ought to do you some good.' Well, sir, the next afternoon Schmitt appeared in the box for St. Paul, and he beat us 4 to 2. He was tickled to death, and as he ran off the field he shouted over to me:

"'Mr. Gushman, dot vos gradidude!'"

One of Cushman's old twirlers—Thornton—is with the Phillies, where he has earned the new title of the "The Mysterious Boxman." One day he is "invincible," and the next afternoon he is as easy to hit as a seltzer lemonade with the mercury at 90 degs. Fahr. "Both Thornton and Elton Chamberlain are pitchers," declared Mr. Cushman, "likely to impress a crowd with the idea that they are indifferent. They chaff the batters and smile all through the game. I've seen Thornton's smile on the field change to a stormy scowl after a defeat as soon as the clubhouse was reached. In that mood he grows mad enough to fight. That is behind the scenes. The crowd that has gone out sore gains the idea that he doesn't care a rap. This example proves that there are cases of 'Oh-what-a-difference-in-the-clubhouse!'"

The reference to the smilers of the box stirs up memories of the old days when George Washington Bradley had a grin that needed no protection by copyright. No one before ever had such a tantalizing smirk, and none of the modern detachment has given evidence that they can successfully imitate it. That diminutive specimen of a twirler, Mr. Gleason, who is on St. Louis' staff, possesses a smile that deserts him neither in sunshine nor in shadow. "Old War Hoss" Radbourne was built just the other way. He had a habit of looking black as a thundercloud when he was being hit.

REN MULFORD, JR.

Indians of the United States.

The Indians have not all died out yet, and their holdings of land are not by any means insignificant. There are said to be in the United States about 250,000 Indians who own or occupy 90,000,000 acres of the public soil.

Lo! the Red Man Flourishes.

Debates on the Indian appropriation bill are always fertile in surprises, and the latest is a statement from an expert in congress that there are as many Indians in America today as in 1492.